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With Mr. Winsor's Compliment

THE

MAYFLOWER TOWN

BY

JUSTIN WINSOR

THE MAYFLOWER TOWN.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

The Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary

OF THE

INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF DUXBURY, MASS.,

JUNE 17, 1887.

BY JUSTIN WINSOR.

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ADDRESS.

I PRAY you let the dissolving view of another scene than this come to your inner vision. Picture yourselves at the doorstone of Miles Standish in the declining hours of a day in June, two centuries and a half ago. Gaze attentively upon the knots of people looking out upon the placid waters of yonder bay, and turning their eyes upon a mellowing sky beyond the Kingston Hills.

You can hardly mistake the master of the house. His three-and-fifty years have left some, if not heavy, marks upon a frame that in his younger days had borne the severities of campaigns in regular armies, and in his sterner manhood had endured the rigors of the wilderness. But you can see that his face still has the volatile lines which mark a nature quick in passion. His eye has still the alertness and his motions the rapidity of those earlier days when he fought in Flanders, and of the later ones when he braved the braggart Pecksuot in the cabin at Wessagusset, or quelled by his daring the revolt of Corbitant. We know by the inventory of his books that the "Commentaries of Cæsar" was a household volume; and we may well conjecture how, with his children and Hobamok looking on, he could trace upon the sand, and place pebbles to mark, the marches and camps of the Roman Legions in Gaul. He was now, as he continued

to be for a score of years yet left to him, trusted in the counsels of the civil government of the colony, and it may be upon his urgency in the Court of Assistants on the morrow that Duxbury is to enter upon her corporate existence. We may well imagine, in view of this contemplated action, how this little gathering of neighbors was formed as a last conference in the scant community, which for five years had been taking up its house-lots along the margin of the bay, and was now combining, after the promptings of their English birthright, to secure their own local government.

Of the Court which was to decide upon their petition in the morning, there were others besides Standish who might well have attended this supposable conference. There was Edward Winslow, who had settled at Greenharbor, as Marshfield was then called, probably occupying a temporary summer shelter there at as early a period as when on the hillocks along the Duxbury shore others of the Plymouth people had begun to build their rude houses. It was just about the time which we are now considering that Winslow had built himself a more commodious lodging, in which he might dare to brave the winter, and had dignified his estate with a name associated with his ancestral line; for he and Standish were the only ones of the first comers whose family stock seems to have been above the yeoman class. There was no definition yet of the bounds of the proposed new town; and it was to surround if not to include Winslow's grant at Marshfield, and to stretch, as was determined some years later, to the North River. Much the same reason had lured Winslow to make a permanent abiding place at Green-

harbor as had brought Standish and the rest to settle along the Duxbury fields, and as three years later Winslow with his neighbors at Greenharbor were to seek incorporation in the same way; and as he was to make part of the Court to determine upon the application of those of Duxbury, we may well imagine him to have joined this probable group. The name which had been selected for the new town, and which for some years had been commonly applied to the settlement on this side of the bay, was a reminiscence of Standish's early days and of his connection with an ancestral line which centred its history in family estates in Lancashire, known to this day as Standish Hall and Duxbury Hall. The somewhat lordly promises of Standish's will for the benefit of his son Alexander and his descendants give a little pleasant flavor of baronial state to the decidedly democratic feeling of the early Plymouth records. It helps us to understand the two somewhat opposing phases of Standish's character, — the sympathetic, companionable nature that impelled him into the simple ways and homely fortunes of the Pilgrims, and that reserve and perhaps hauteur of individualism which never forgot his inherited rights.

Standish seems, if we may trust the records, to have brought to the Pilgrim store small riches compared with that somewhat profuse wealth which his will represents him as having been surreptitiously deprived of; or at least he stands on the lists of rate-payers of the little colony far below Winslow and Collier, the other members of the Court of Assistants for this year, from this part of the bay and beyond. Riches to these early settlers consisted not so much in land as in the ability to work it, in the cattle

they could feed, and in the merchandise they could order from England. Now that the settlements of Massachusetts Bay were well established and prospering, the Plymouth people, — who had largely increased their herds and flocks from the small importation of three heifers and a bull, which had been brought over in 1624, — found a quick sale for any surplus in the necessities of the Massachusetts people; and Bradford offers serious complaint that the accumulation of riches, and the methods to that end, were making sad changes in the quiet, self-centred little community which but a few years before had made the town of Plymouth homogeneous and content. This increase of their stock had induced them to move farther and farther from the town to find pasturage; and where a summer sojourn had sufficed at first, a permanence of settlement, provided with all the relief and aids by which the winter could be combated, necessarily soon followed, breaking up connections with the parent church at Plymouth, and at one time causing almost the desertion of that town. It was not without grievous presentiments of evils to come in this train of events, that Bradford records these beginnings of the towns of Duxbury and Marshfield. His fears that the division of the church would lead to political independence in local affairs was only too evident some years before it came; and Bradford must confront the inevitable issue at the sitting of the Court on the next day, for which this little conference was preparing.

Plymouth had in fact by this time ceased to be the chief home of the "Mayflower" Pilgrims. Bradford was the only one of the first comers of much consideration remaining in that town. It stirred him deeply to find

how the chief men had abandoned the places which had been hallowed by their early sufferings. Brewster, Standish, Winslow, Alden, Howland, and two of their companions in that fateful voyage of whom we hear less, George Soule and Henry Sampson, — every one was now living on the Duxbury side and adjacent. Of those who had come later, Collier and Prince and the sons of Brewster were their neighbors here. What Plymouth thus early lost she has never regained; and the "Mayflower" blood in the male lines, except as descendants of these Duxbury settlers have returned to the old home, make no longer an appreciable part of her population. I recall how forty years ago, as a boy, smitten with the love of genealogy, I traced down the widening lines of descent from the "Mayflower," and found, as it seemed to me, half the people of this town possessed of the strain of the Pilgrim blood.

Of more marked bearing, perhaps, than either Standish or Winslow, is he who is the eldest by much of all who are gathered before us, and whose memory goes back for nearly seventy years. How should we like to-day that instrument, which the scientists say we may one day possess, to take from the air still palpitating with the undulating words of this reverend man his discourse, as he stands there in reverie, turning aside it may be at times to impart to Ralph Partridge, the new-come minister of the town, the shifting visions of the past! There was, indeed, little in the scene before him, — the waters streaked with the vagrant breezes, the rosy flush that lay over the distant hills of Plymouth, the purple mass of Manomet, and the woody headland of the Gurnet peering above the dusky outline of yonder island, — little in all this to bring back,

except by contrast, that village of Scrooby, in Nottinghamshire, where he passed his childhood. Think for a moment of this aged Christian teacher, and of this doughty soldier, passing among his guests and coming to the other's side, and of the contrasts and startling visions which might have come and gone, dissolving in their minds, — Brewster, who might well have copied for Secretary Davison, his master, the death-warrant of the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots; and Standish, with his recollections of the campaigns in Flanders, where, scion of a Catholic stock himself, we are told that his sword had been wielded against the Spanish Romanists! Think, again, how the hoary associations of the storied halls along the Cam might have poured upon the mind of Brewster, as he recalled his life at the English university, when at Peterhouse College nearly sixty years before he had laid the foundations of a learning which for many years was the most considerable possessed by any among the Pilgrims. As we look upon him now he seems almost like a relic of a by-gone generation. The courtiers he had met, the scholars he had known, must have come and gone in his memory like the stalking shapes of a dream. We can imagine how in his moments of reminiscence, as his thoughts went back to the friends of his early manhood, his heart if not his foot trod the Bay Path to the Massachusetts settlements, over which Partridge had so lately travelled. This new-comer could tell him how the colleges of Cambridge and Oxford had within these seven years sent their most heroic souls into this neighboring wilderness. But nearly all these men were quite a generation the juniors of Brewster. Partridge could tell him of a contemporary at the Univer-

sity, — Nathaniel Ward, — and of the beginning of his ministry at Agawam in the Massachusetts, where his active intelligence made him a few years later the draftsman of the "Body of Liberties" of that sturdier colony. Partridge could tell him, too, of the men of his own college, Trinity; and every message from the Bay brought word of what John Cotton had said in Boston, or Thomas Welde in Roxbury, or Hugh Peters in Salem. Brewster could point to a fellow collegian of Peterhouse — long after him to be sure — in John Norton, to whom they had listened in Plymouth for the winter, a year or two before.

Recall, if you will, some of the other names which Massachusetts preserves, bearing thither from the University of Cambridge the memories of her halls, and awakening in the breast of William Brewster the tender affiliations of fellowship in learning, as he heard of their coming to carry a stout heart, and to press on with simple, earnest endeavor in breaking out the primordial pathways of a nation. The Pilgrims' shallop, as it explored the coast to the northward, must have brought to him word, even before the coming of Winthrop, of that mysterious recluse, William Blaxton, who pre-empted in 1625 the site of the future Boston. Other Cambridge men whose wandering hither was not unknown to him were Francis Higginson, of Salem; Roger Williams, who but a year or two before the time we are now considering had fled from Salem to Plymouth, to be hardly more welcome there with the upheavals of his instincts; Thomas Hooker, who had but a twelvemonth before led a migrating community from the banks of the Charles to the valley of the Connecticut, — a migration not without influence, as we shall see, upon

the vote to be passed to-morrow; the godly Shepard, who had taken the place which Hooker had left, little suspecting then that the unknown John Harvard, bringing with him the Puritanism of Emmanuel, at this very moment, when Brewster's reverie might have turned his spiritual eye to the future of learning in New England, was crossing the Atlantic with a dream of the great university shadowy in his mind, and bearing among his books, as we know from the list preserved in the College records, the Essays of John Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrims.

To a man of Brewster's learning, as Bradford describes it to us, the coming of Ralph Partridge to him as a neighbor must have produced grateful recollections of the associations of Cambridge in contrast to a time twenty years later than his own, and when Puritanism had made Emmanuel its stronghold. He could well remember how at Peterhouse he had acquired in the first instance his Puritan tendency, and how, as he left Cambridge for more stirring fields, it was still under the Puritan diplomatist Davison that he got his first glimpses of the Low Countries, so that when some years later he went thither into exile it was not to a land wholly unknown to him. It was this same Puritan Davison who later interceded to get him the office of postmaster in his native village, which his father had held before him, and which, through the control that it gave him of relays on the great post-route to the north, offered him a position of not a little local importance. Here it was in the habitable portion of an ancient manor-house of the archbishops of York, the postmaster William Brewster passed nearly twelve years of his early maturity, — years which proved to be the turning-point of his life.

The motive and effect of that change of life, which had heretofore known its due share of the bustle of the world, we can well understand when we read that tribute to his character which has come down to us from the pen of Bradford, and which enables us from what he was in this cardinal period of his life to conjecture the man he was to become in the ripening of time. His friend tells us of Brewster's grave and deliberate utterance; of his humble, modest, and inoffensive demeanor; of his cheerful spirit, not dismayed by trial, and always rising above the worst that could beset him; and of his tenderness, particularly for those who had been driven to extremities for which their life had not prepared them. If such was the native character of the man, it is not surprising that when that flock of English folk scattered about Scrooby in the three counties of Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire had been drawn together and needed a friend earnest to protect them, they found one in William Brewster. The pity he felt for an inoffensive, humble people harried by the minions of the law, very easily became, as it happened, joined to the admiration which he could feel for such a servitor and minister as they had in John Robinson. This pastor and his principal follower were sharers by nature in all that was tender, tolerant, and hopeful in their religious feelings. Of Robinson's scholarship, — for he too was of Cambridge, though a dozen years later than Brewster, — his companion was to know the deepest and to honor the broadest part. It was through Brewster's welcome in his ancient manor-house that Robinson and his flock now found a place of meeting, when by stealth, or as best they could, they met for mutual comfortings and for the service of prayer.

We may well suppose that Partridge listened to a story like this with the interest natural to one whom fortune had thrown among a people who had found a common inheritance in all the tender recollections of such a life as the older of the first comers had experienced. He could but see in the veneration felt for their ancient elder that the wisdom of Brewster, as it had been the guide of his neighbors, must be his own in his ministration to this people in the coming years. From Brewster he must learn their individual traits; he must know the joys and miseries of each household, the aspirations of one person, the estrangements of another; and he must walk with him among the graves at Harden Hill, and listen to the completion of the family histories in the enumerations of those that are gone.

I cannot now detail the whole course of that story which Brewster must have told to his new helper whenever he easily reverted, as old men do, to the memories of their younger days; of the imprisonment which he suffered; of the flight with the congregation of Scrooby to Holland, — first to Amsterdam, where they found other English who had preceded them, and in whose controversies over the questions of bodices and high heels they were little inclined to join as a thing worth the enduring of exile. Brewster must have told him how they parted with their less spiritual countrymen and passed on to Leyden, destined to be so long their home. You know the straits to which they submitted, — poverty, and hard labor for a living; but never forgetting the land which drove them forth. They who, as Bradford said, had been used "to a plain country life and the innocent trade of hus-

bandry," were thus thrown into a strange city and forced to learn a strange tongue. We can well imagine how Partridge, who had been a Church of England clergyman, would listen to this wonderful story, — of Robinson holding all together by his tact and by his love; of his gaining the respect of the Leyden University, which is illustrious with the names of Arminius, Scaliger, and Grotius; of his publicly disputing with the professors, when he had been honored with membership of their learned body; and of his contributing by his acquirements and sweetness to that repute which they enjoyed with the Dutch, and which the honesty and orderliness of the less learned among these outcast English helped to intensify. Brewster might well revert to his honorable calling then as a schoolmaster, teaching English through the Latin to Dutch, Dane, or German, as either required it. He might also recount how when later in their sojourn a young English gentleman had joined them, bringing doubtless some little capital to work with, so that Brewster and Winslow (perchance this same gentleman comes up now to the front to listen to the recital) could set up a press and print for clandestine introduction into England the doctrinal books and tracts that the licensers of the English press had prohibited.

Standish himself might have joined in the talk too, and told what we to-day would be glad to know, — just how he chanced to join this exiled people. It has been claimed of late years with some show of plausibility by Dr. Shea, the most eminent of the native Catholic writers on American history, that the fact (uncontroverted I believe) that Standish never became covenanted with the Pilgrim Church, coupled to the other fact (equally unchallenged

I think) that he belonged to a Lancashire family, then as now one of the well-known Catholic families of the realm, afforded ground for holding the Duxbury captain to be one of that faith. These facts do not certainly prove it, nor yet is the allegation positively disproved by anything we know. If Standish were a Catholic, it may or may not have been known to his leading associates in the colony. To suppose they knew it, and because of his helpfulness to have ignored it, is but a step further than to have trusted him as they did when he was without the pale of their covenant. If Bradford had survived him to write his character as he wrote Brewster's, we might possibly have been informed. As it is, we inherit a mystery.

But, see! there is a new comer to our Leyden group. Who is that fair and rosy woman, bewitching one may well believe her to be, as she dismounts from the pillion behind John Alden, greets Barbara Standish, — the Captain's wife, — as she trips along in the early development of her matronly comeliness, glancing at the Captain himself, in remembrance of the incident which Longfellow has immortalized, and draws near to pay her affectionate homage to Elder Brewster, — who but that Priscilla who so witchingly said, "Prithee, why don't you speak for yourself, John?" She makes in the group a new element, for in her veins courses the blood of the Huguenots; and out of the Church of the Walloons in Leyden came the names of Molines, changed to Mullins, and Delanoye, which we now know as Delano.

And so in these years of their exile in Holland the Pilgrim Church grew to about three hundred souls; but with all their outward prosperity there was a spirit of unrest.

It grieved their English hearts to see their young men growing up with foreign ways, marrying Dutch maidens and joining the Dutch marine. The truce of Holland with Spain, soon to expire, might bring upon them the clash of arms in a country not their own. They said to one another, "Let us go hence to save this English blood of ours." "Let us go and carry Christ to the New World," said Edward Winslow.

There is no time to-day to rehearse the story which the narrative of Bradford has made clear to us, of the hard bargain which some English merchants forced upon them in their negotiations for the money necessary for their transfer to America. Here in William Collier is one of those same London merchants who could tell us the whole story. He is one of the two or three of the seventy merchants who had heart enough in the migration to come over to share its burdens; and he had already settled, in company with Prince and Jonathan Brewster, along the line of what we know as the shore road to Kingston. Prince had married a daughter of Collier, as had also Love Brewster, another son of the Elder. William Brewster himself had participated in those counsels for the outfit, but we cannot follow them now. Hard as the terms were, they were accepted; and such of them as were to part with the major portion of the Church that remained behind with Robinson passed their last night in Leyden with feasting and psalms. Who would not wish that we had preserved to us in his very words the farewell address which Robinson made to them; but it unfortunately has only come down to us as it floated in the memory of Edward Winslow many years later, —

with its exalted tenderness, its far-seeing wisdom, and its lofty, tolerant purpose.

We may suppose Brewster to have retired with the falling dews to his home, and to have left Alden to rehearse to Partridge the continuance of the story. There were three of the "Mayflower" settlers now in Duxbury who belonged to the class of which Alden was the most conspicuous member, — unless, perhaps, John Howland be excepted. These were men not of the Leyden stock, but hired by the company, or apprenticed or bound to some of the leading men at their immigration. In this way, though at coming a man of twenty-seven, John Howland was a member of Governor Carver's family; George Soule, at this time soon to become a settler at Powder Point and the ancestor of a numerous family of that name, was bound to Edward Winslow; and Henry Sampson, a lad of six years at coming, was under the care of his cousins Edward Tilley and wife, both of whom died in that first grievous winter, while the youth Sampson had been at this time a year married, and was to become the ancestor of a numerous family, — though not of all bearing the name. The one person of this class whom Bradford singles out for commendation is John Alden. He tells us that he was hired for a cooper in Southampton, where the "Mayflower" fitted, "and being a hopeful young man," he adds, "was much desired, but left to his own liking to go or stay when he came here [to Plymouth]; but he stayed and married here," and what that marriage with his fair Priscilla produced, the genealogical tables of numerous descendants abundantly make plain.

We can imagine Alden now explaining to Partridge, the new minister, how he was pursuing his trade in Southampton when the "Mayflower" came round from London with such of the Pilgrims as had gathered there to join in the voyage; and to these Londoners we can probably trace the London designation of landmarks, which in my boyhood were and perhaps still are familiar in this town, — Blackfriar's Brook, Billingsgate, Hound's Ditch, and the rest. Alden could tell how the little "Speedwell" had followed her into port for the rendezvous, freighted with the heavy souls made indeed the lighter for the benedictions of Robinson. He would tell of the conference there, when he first came in contact with the noble spirits among whom his life was to be cast; of the trials which he saw them endure as the merchants whom they had trusted for succor turned their backs upon them; of their departure at last, and of their fears of the smaller ship; their return to Dartmouth for repairs, their venturing again, their seeking a harbor once more at Plymouth on the Devonshire coast, their abandonment of the "Speedwell," their final start with all that the "Mayflower" could hold crowded in her narrow quarters, their voyage and its mishaps. He could tell of the beam of the deck sprung out of place by the storm that forced them to take in every sail, and how they succeeded in raising it into place by an iron screw which they had brought from Holland; how John Howland by a lurch of the ship had been hurled into the sea, and by good luck rescued to live many years, as Bradford says in describing the incident, and to become "a profitable member both in Church and Commonwealth."

You remember they were bound under the patent which

they had received from the old Virginia Company to find land somewhere in the neighborhood of Hudson River, perhaps on the Connecticut, perhaps on the Jersey coast; and it is almost equally certain that they had with them the map of the New England coast which John Smith had made when he examined its bays and headlands six years before, and had later published with the native names displaced by the English ones marked by Prince Charles on the draught which the engraver followed. So when at last they sighted land they knew it by the description to be the sand-hills of that point which was called on Smith's map Cape James, after the Prince's royal father, but which the mariners who had been on the coast before, — and they had such among the crew, — told them was nevertheless known by those who frequented the region for traffic with the Indians by the designation which Captain Gosnold had given it eighteen years before, when he was surprised at the numbers of fish which he found thereabouts, and called it Cape Cod. As soon as it became evident where they were, they turned to the south to seek the place of their destination; but before long getting among the shoals off Nauset, and fearing that after all their tribulations they were running too great hazards to proceed, they turned once more northward, and rounding the head of the Cape came at last to anchor in the shelter of what we know now as Provincetown harbor.

I fear that the visitor, who stands on yonder hill and reads inscribed on the base of that monument the names of those who came in the "Mayflower," associates them all with that Faith which is typified in the statue above them; but the scrutiny of the historian can lay his finger

upon more than one name in the list which stands for little of that sublimating virtue, for such names belong to men thrown fortuitously among them, — hired men, or forced into the company by the cupidity of the merchants who backed their undertaking on its mercantile side. There were honorable exceptions among this class of the "Mayflower" company; and we can see here in John Alden, John Howland, and George Soule those whose hopefulness of character made them soon take on the Pilgrims' spirit. But with John Smith's map spread out before them on the deck of the "Mayflower," and finding that stress of weather and the lateness of the season had rendered it necessary to cease the attempt to find a haven within the privileges of their patent, and that they were brought beyond the pale of the delegated authority which that patent vested in their leaders, on territory not within the bounds of such necessary control, — it was then that mutterings from some at least of these same hired men and apprentices, eager to make the most of their freedom which chance had seemingly given them, made it necessary to draft that immortal compact, wherein by the subscription of all this band of exiles, in the very spirit of their religious independence, took on themselves the power of a body politic, fit to govern themselves and compel the subjection of any that were evil disposed. Look around this little group, and see who among them are left of those that signed that fundamental example of constitutional government, — William Brewster, Miles Standish, Edward Winslow, John Alden, John Howland, George Soule, — all here in Duxbury, and all except Soule men of the first consideration in the colony, of whom Alden was destined

to be the latest survivor of all the signers, including the four others then living in Plymouth, — Bradford and Stephen Hopkins; with two of less consideration, — Francis Cooke and Edward Doten.

As a student of American history, I have often thought that of all the documents connected with that theme there were two I would give most to see. One is that early draught of the New World, making part of a map of the four quarters of the earth, drawn by Leonardo da Vinci, who of all men seemed easiest to stretch his vision to the periphery of all knowledge and of all mental capability, — drawn by Da Vinci, and bearing upon it, so far as existing original records can demonstrate, the written name of America, for the first time in human history. That paper it was my fortune, some years since, to gaze upon, in the cabinet of the Queen at Windsor. The other document, transcending for us even in interest this of Da Vinci, — not that I would measure any name upon it with his in its superlative glory, but that they are significant, for us at least, above all others in the history of constitutional government, — is this bit of paper which bears this business-like and comprehensive compact, this germ that has grown till the branches of the tree have covered a vast continent, this experiment which has riveted the attention of students of political science everywhere. But, alas! no one of this generation, no one of any generation within our record since the first comers themselves, has looked upon it; and even to this little group, which we are, as it were, among to-day, and which may be now recalling it, it doubtless never had any interest beyond the few months when, as a temporary expedient, it served them as the foundation and guaranty of their liberties.

Thus have we stood in our communion face to face for a while with these builders of a people's fame; and as the sun goes down and they separate for their homes, — Winslow, we may be sure, remaining for the night with Standish, for he must accompany him to Plymouth in the morning, — we can ponder on their fidelity to the characteristics of race which they had brought with them from the Old World, giving never a thought to the ideas which have so perplexed the modern students of institutional history as to the origin of the methods of local government with which they were to be so soon clothed, and falling into the ways of that little democracy, the New England town, as easily as traditions are exemplified in conduct, and experience moulds what inheritance suggests.

And so the night fell upon the little community. The reddened sky of the west had paled in the gloaming. The full orb of our satellite had risen above the beach, and the moon-glade trembled athwart the bay. Tread lightly with me as we enter the habitation of their sainted Elder. Pause with me as we see him at his solitary devotion. The glimmer of the eastern herald quivers on the lifting waves of his thin and silvered locks, as the gentle air from the tide enters the window of his chamber. Governor Bradford, his most reverent disciple, has told us of the singular felicity of invocation which belonged to this pious man; and I seem to catch the cadence, far off and musical, of that tremulous voice, —

> Father, near to all thy creatures,
> Howe'er distant is their lot,
> With thy vesture falling round us
> And thy mercies failing not, —

In our exile have we planted
Precious seed upon this soil,
And are waiting for the harvests
To be garnered for our toil ;
In our living are our crosses
Kneaded by thee like to leaven,
For we know that we are pilgrims,
And our dearest country, heaven !

Give this people, as thy chosen,
What of chastisement they need,
That for them thy gentle finger
Stanch their bruises as they bleed ;
May their best endeavor prosper
As they buckle for the fight,
If they move along the pathway
On the stepping-stones of right.

Let not all the noonday visions
Which their proud ambitions form,
With the hopes of coming glories
Which on eager spirits swarm,
Make them heedless, as they wander,
Of thy never-erring grace,
Of thy hand that e'er sustaineth
In the lifting of a race, —
Make them heedless of the glory
Of the Lord and all his hosts,
Till they barter Zion's mountain
For the littleness of boasts.

Grant them solace in this midnight,
Groping for thy garment's hem,
Watching in Orion's glory
For Jehovah's diadem !

Brilliantly rose the sun on the next morning. Standish and his guest were early astir, and as they stood on the bank above the tide the two formed a picturesque group. Winslow, despite the cloak and the peaked hat and the matchlock upon which he leaned, had something of the air of the courtly gentleman, as we see it in that portrait which hangs to-day in Pilgrim Hall, — the only indisputable likeness which has come down to us of a "Mayflower" pilgrim. Standish wore his leathern doublet, his broad band athwart his breast sustaining that sword of the Oriental inscription along its blade which has puzzled modern scholars, his hose above his buckled shoes disclosing the ribbed muscle of his calf. He handled nervously the fowling-piece, which the inventory at his death shows us was found among his effects, and which came easily to his shoulder as he sighted a flock of dipping crows among his young corn. The harried birds rose flapping, and flecked the sky as they surged away to the tall clump of whitewood trees which gave the name of Eagle's Nest to the vicinity of Elder Brewster's homestead, and some of whose gaunt and bleached trunks I remember to have heard in my youth old people say that they recalled. Coming along the lower slope of the hill three persons approached. Two of them were Thomas Prince, who lived within sight, and Timothy Hatherly, who had come from Scituate, both knowing they could find passage in the Captain's boat.

Here then these four with Collier, — who lived also within sight, but was debarred coming, — constituted the larger part of the Court which was this day to decide important questions for the little colony in Plymouth,

where the Governor and John Jenney, the other assistant, were expecting their coming. Hobamok, the Indian who for sixteen years had been an attendant upon Standish and a companion in his wanderings, joined the group, as he carried the head of a wolf which he had recently killed, and which he was taking to Plymouth to claim his reward of five bushels of corn. The magistrates entered the boat, Hobamok pushed at the prow, there was a prolonged grating of the keel, and as the little craft slid off into deeper water the sail was hoisted, and in the fresh southerly breeze she bore away towards the channel over against Clark's island. On its welcome shore two at least of this little company had landed from the "Mayflower's" shallop on that fearful night in December, 1620; when, entering by the Gurnet's nose in a driving snow-storm, they barely succeeded in bringing their reeling boat under the lea of this island, where they passed two days and held their first religious service. Standish and Winslow might well remember the explorations of the next day, when they discovered that they were on an island. They could tell the others how they had recourse to Smith's map to see where they were. Before they left the "Mayflower," then lying in Cape Cod harbor, that map had told them how over against them on the mainland was a harbor with a considerable island in it, since Smith had so drawn it, and Prince Charles had called the spot Plymouth. The name could but have reminded them of the Devonshire Plymouth, the last English port they had left. But Smith, as we now know, had not made the only map of the harbor which had been engraved before this. There is no likelihood, however, that the Pilgrims ever knew any other.

Hobamok may well have remembered Smith's visit, and that of Dermer, who only the year before the Pilgrims came had been in the harbor to find that between Smith's visit and his — an interval of five years — a plague had swept off, hardly without an exception, the native villages which were scattered round the bay. Dermer had brought back to his native woods Hobamok's old rival for the good-will of the English, Squanto, who had been kidnapped by one of Smith's captains, and had had a little experience of civilized life in Europe in the mean time, and had acquired some knowledge of English, which gave him at first a certain advantage over Hobamok.

The other map to which I refer was Champlain's, which he made on a visit in 1605, quite within the memory of Hobamok; but the Pilgrims would probably have been as much surprised as their Indian friend to learn that while they were in Leyden a map of their harbor had been issued in Paris, in 1613, — not very accurate to be sure, but still as near the truth as the explorer's maps of that time were likely to be.

We may imagine our Captain's boat long before noon making her way where the deepest water lies, and bumping her stem against the very rock on which this same exploring party, whom we have thought of on yonder island, had landed, when on Monday after their Sabbath's rest they touched for the first time the mainland of the harbor. It is altogether improbable that Standish and his companions, landing there again as we may suppose on the 17th of June, 1637, had any suspicions that the nameless boulder on which they stepped would become historic, — such at least is the inference which we may naturally

draw from the absence of any mention of it by any of the Pilgrims themselves. As they passed from the landing up the way which now bears the name of their Leyden home, the memories of that first winter might throng upon them. Here on the left what recollections clung to the Common House, built in their first month! How up this incline they dragged the great guns from the "Mayflower" to mount them on the hill! Standish could tell how at one time he and Brewster, and four or five others, were the only ones left able to succor the many sick. Winslow could tell how he went to yonder hill across the brook to meet Massasoit, and to make through Squanto's help the treaty that brought peace between the English and the natives, and kept it for fifty years. Up the slope of the hill Standish could see the spot where he had first built his cabin; and close at hand was Alden's early home, before he had removed and built his house at the Bluefish, in Duxbury. Beyond and above stood the level-roofed fort with the cannon upon it, — not the same in appearance as it had been, for it had just been strengthened and enlarged, since there were rumors of war, as we shall soon see.

The magistrates stopped at the door of the Governor's house, where two halberdiers stood without, making a suitable state for the little colony on its court day. Standish, we may be sure, got the salute which he claimed, as with the others he entered the house. It was not long before, in the Governor's study, — for Bradford's inventory shows that his books were not few, and his nephew tells us of the room which contained them, — the dignified little Court proceeded to "handle business," as

the phrase with them went. It is one of the remarkable phases of Plymouth Colony, that with very little of the paraphernalia of a code of laws they set to work to develop a practical autonomy, which answered every purpose through the seventy years of the colony's independent existence. Judge Story refers to the brevity and the fewness of their laws; and while allowing for the narrow limits of the population and the scant business of the colony as being in some measure the cause of it, he contends that this simplicity was in a large degree owing to their reliance upon the general principles of the English Common Law.

What the magistrates did during the meeting to which we have now brought them is a fair example of their ways in legislation, as done in this all-sufficient court of the Governor and five "justices of the peace of our sovereign lord the King and assistants in the government," — as the record reads. To understand the significance of all that was done at this meeting, while they make to this town the grant running after the fashion of the time, "to be holden of our sovereign lord the King, as of his manor and tenure of East Greenwich in the County of Kent," with a due reservation of gold and silver ore, — to understand this consummation, we must take for a moment a view of the somewhat broader relations of the colony, and see how these contributed to hasten, or at least to make compatible with existing circumstances, the incorporation of Duxbury.

We remember that as the Pilgrims began in their excursions by land and water to know the country better, they had gradually come to doubt whether on the whole they

had been wise in the selection of a spot for their settlement. It was greatly in its favor, as they were aware, that the immediate country was without Indian occupants, since the plague had swept it so thoroughly; and they could but rejoice in the friendly sentiments of the Wampanoags, their nearest native neighbors, and of Massasoit their chief. Still the soil they ploughed hardly gave the promise which they saw in it on that bright day when, after landing on the rock, their exploring party strayed back into the land and found "divers cornfields and little running brooks," which seemed inviting even under a winter's aspect. In the seventeen years during which their acquaintance with the country, then as now called New England, had been widening, there was no region into which they had pushed for exploration and trade that on the whole pleased them so much as the valley of the Connecticut. Not long after the settlement of Boston, seven years before this, a sachem of that country had come to the Massachusetts people and to Plymouth, with an invitation to send colonists among his people. It turned out, indeed, that the Pequods, who lived not far off from this sachem, were making inroads upon the tribes of the Connecticut, and that the latter were more in want of allies than of neighbors, though they did not profess it. The Massachusetts people declined the invitation; but Winslow, then governor of Plymouth, had heard from some of his own adventurous people, who in their pinnace had been up the river to trade, of the goodness of the soil and of the otherwise pleasant look of the valley. The Plymouth governor was enough satisfied with the proposal to visit the country himself, whence he brought away favorable impressions. There were rumors at

the time that the Dutch from Manhattan were intending by occupation to enforce their right to the territory; and to prevent this was held to be of so much consequence, that Winslow and Bradford had gone to Boston to urge a joint occupation by Plymouth and the Bay. Winthrop, however, pleaded various reasons in opposition, among them poverty, — which in the light of the meagre treasury of the older colony was not very convincing. So the Plymouth people were left to organize the enterprise alone, and to send out a vessel laden with the frame of a house, and to set it up on the river as the beginning of a trading-post. The Dutch, however, had anticipated them, and as the Plymouth vessel approached the site of the modern Hartford, the Hollanders turned the cannon of their fort upon it; but they hesitated to fire, as the little sloop pushed boldly by. At a place above, where is now the town of Windsor, the adventurers bought of the Indians a tract of land, and erecting their house they began trading for furs. There were later symptoms of animosity on the part of the Dutch, but it did not go to the length of violence; and we know not how much the old-time relations of the two peoples in Leyden may have had to do with the forbearance.

Already the success of the Windsor settlement had begun to turn the eyes of the Plymouth people to the more inviting bottom lands of the Connecticut. We have seen how, because of the increase of their cattle and flocks, they had in search of pasturage made in the first place summer sojourns along the Duxbury side of the bay, which were naturally soon converted into

permanent abodes. By 1632 it had become desirable for these distant worshippers to think of organizing a church for themselves, which was permitted under Brewster's paternal care; but the Court insisted that settlers so far distant from the protection of the Plymouth fort should be, every man of them, armed; and in a short time their houses were palisaded, and a considerable defence of this nature was built across the entrance to what we know as the Nook. We find, in 1632, Standish, Prince, Alden, and Jonathan Brewster signing an agreement to return to Plymouth in the winter. It was thus early with the formation of their church that Duxbury became the first offshoot from the Plymouth stock. The church at Scituate was the second, in 1634, though from the greater remoteness of that region it was given its civil independence a year earlier than Duxbury.

I have referred to the apprehension which Bradford felt, that this scattering of the people might hazard the principles which had bound them together, and which had so far governed them. That many shared Bradford's distrust was evident from the growing conviction that the greater fertility of the Connecticut valley might support their population more compactly. So the Connecticut experiment was closely watched for the chance it might offer of a general emigration from the more sterile region about Plymouth Bay.

It soon became clear that there were causes which were to prevent the fulfilment of any such scheme. It became, in 1635, plain that the Massachusetts people were conscious of having made a mistake in allowing

Plymouth to gain a footing in that attractive region. Winthrop confesses it when he says that neither the Dutch nor even other English must be allowed to establish themselves there. In the struggle which the spirit of this acknowledgment rendered inevitable, it was evident that the greater population of the Bay was equal to the same task which in our day the North undertook when they measured their strength with the South in the colonization of Kansas. When the Dorchester migration, in 1635, set towards the Connecticut the struggle was begun, and the migration under Hooker soon followed. The attack was reinforced when the new Connecticut patentees sent vessels up the river with other colonists. The Plymouth people could not mistake the warning which their agent, Jonathan Brewster, a Duxbury man, sent to them, in July, 1635, that the new-comers were occupying the land all about the Plymouth trading-house, — land which Plymouth had bought of the natives, and had taken possession of in due form. Remonstrance was in vain, both there by their agents and at Boston by their magistrates; and in March, 1636, the Massachusetts people delegated powers for a year to magistrates appointed to govern their new colony of Connecticut.

Now for a moment look at what was doing in Plymouth and Duxbury, in this month of March, 1636. There had become so general an apprehension of the risk attending the scattering of settlers round the bay, — and the remedy would become more imperative in case the Connecticut lands should allure large numbers, — that the matter was referred to Standish and other leading men whether the

Plymouth and Duxbury people should not abandon their present settlements and unite compactly at Jones River, or at Morton's Hole, as the region lying neighboring to the present roads from Duxbury to Kingston was called. The majority voted for Jones River, where Kingston now is, but we have no record that anything further was done. The reason seems to have been that the Connecticut question was approaching an issue. Winslow had been sent to Boston to adjust the dispute; but delays ensued, till finally Plymouth saw that the struggle was a hopeless one, and in May, 1637, Thomas Prince was empowered to make for a consideration a formal transfer of their Connecticut lands — with the reservation only of a small portion lying about their trading-post — to an agent of the Connecticut people. "Thus," says Bradford, "the controversy was ended; but the unkindness was not so soon forgotten." Thus, too, now that the settlements about the bay were not to be depleted for the Connecticut migration, it became a necessity to give those on the Duxbury side the form of an incorporation.

Bradford's reference to the lingering feeling of distrust which Massachusetts had forced upon the weaker colony, had its manifestation very soon in the way in which Plymouth met the appeal of Winthrop to afford his people some help in the war which they quickly found the ambitious Pequods were bound to wage. It was not the first ground of affront which Plymouth had against the Bay Colony, and they gave its magistrates a pointed rejoinder. They reminded them of a few years before, when the French had dispossessed the Plymouth people of a trading-post on the Kennebec,

how Massachusetts had refused to join out of common interest in an attempt to recover it. They reminded them how they had virtually dispossessed the Plymouth people of their lands on the Connecticut; and as if remembering how Winthrop had covered his refusal to join them in the Connecticut occupation by pleading poverty, the Plymouth magistrates now found that the same excuse could stand them in as good a stead.

But the interests of the two peoples were too much intertwined for any permanent estrangement to exist, especially as renewed letters from Massachusetts had shown that a common cause in defending the Narragansetts against the Pequods was becoming more and more a necessity

Thus it is that the first business done in this Court of the Plymouth magistrates which we are now watching, was action taken on a further urgent request of Winthrop. Accordingly, the record tells us that a force of thirty men, with as many others as may be needed to manage the barque, shall be sent under Lieutenant William Holmes — the same who sailed his sloop past the cannon of the Dutch — to assist those of Massachusetts and Connecticut in their wars against the Pequods in "revenge for the innocent blood of the English, which they have barbarously shed." They also chose by lot Mr. Thomas Prince to accompany the party as counsellor to the Lieutenant. There is much else spread upon the record, of the necessary provisions which the expedition required, including a list of such as volunteered for the service. It was

significant of the years that had passed since the "Mayflower" touched these shores, that among these willing soldiers appear the names of the child Henry Sampson, now a man of twenty-three, and Peregrine White, now a stripling of seventeen, who had been born in Cape Cod harbor. It is enough to add that a quick stroke mainly on the part of Connecticut put an end to the war, the news whereof arrived in time to prevent the starting of the Plymouth quota.

We may imagine for the next business the whole story of these recent events to be gone over in the discussion which followed the introduction, very likely by Standish, of the order for the incorporation of the new town. There may have been an enlargement upon the justice and necessity of the case, upon the passing of the opportunity which might have rendered necessary the drawing of the scattered population closer together, if the Connecticut migration had been consummated; but though Bradford as governor made the necessary minutes of the meeting, he has not preserved to us more than the vote, which we are this day assembled to commemorate. "It is enacted by the Court that Ducksborrow shall become a towneship, and unite together for their better securitie, and to have the pv^rledges of a towne; onely their bounds and limmits shalbe sett and appoynted by the next Court."

And so Duxbury became one of those little democracies which have made New England what she is; for

her failings as well as virtues can be traced to them. Such as it is, citizens of Duxbury, one of these little democracies is your heritage. You have met to-day to authenticate your title to it, and to pass it on to coming generations.

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